

GEORGE EYSTER.

JUNE 13, 1876.—Committed to a Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. THOMAS, from the Committee on Ways and Means, submitted the following

REPORT:

The Committee on Ways and Means, to whom was referred the petition of George Eyster, of Philadelphia, submit the following report:

The petitioner, George Eyster, is assistant treasurer of the United States at Philadelphia, and represents that there exists in the funds of his office a deficit of \$882.50 in coin, which arose, as he avers, through the dishonesty of one of his employés.

The facts of the case are as follows: Soon after the passage of the new mint-law, approved February 12, 1873, and operative on and since April 1, 1873, the Treasury Department issued instructions for the examination of the gold coin in his office, so that such portion as fell below the limit of abrasion fixed in the law might be recoined. His office had on hand on the last-mentioned date, in gold coin, the sum of \$6,134,320.

The work of separation was commenced and carried on as rapidly as the business of the office would warrant, and shipments for recoinage were made from time to time to the mint. At length, on the 8th day of September, 1873, when the work was nearly completed, and as a quantity of light coin (\$315,000) was about to be sent away, it occurred to the cashier that it would be better to have it weighed, and it was accordingly done, and revealed the fact that one bag, supposed to contain \$5,000 in quarter-eagles, was \$1,000 short.

When this discovery was made, all the gold coin then in the office was also weighed, full weight as well as light, when it was discovered that one of the full-weight bags contained an excess of \$200, leaving a net short of \$800. The full-weight bag containing the excess had been counted, put-up, and marked by the clerk who had heretofore charge of the receipt of coin from the customs-office. The bag referred to was one peculiar in appearance as well as in the manner in which it was marked. The "over" had necessarily a connection with the "short," and in this connection the peculiar character of the bag containing the excess was suggestive. Besides, it was discovered that the bag that was found to be short was an unseparated bag, although it had been placed among those that were "separated" and light.

Mr. Eyster immediately investigated the matter, summoned to his presence Benjamin F. Bond, the clerk referred to, and put to him many questions, both in private and before witnesses. His answers for the most part were equivocating and very unsatisfactory. He professed an ignorance of such matters that must or should have been within his knowledge.

The clerk expressed the conviction, before he had been examined by Mr. Eyster, that the loss would be laid to his (Bond's) charge, and when it was proposed to weigh the coin, Bond protested that it was useless to do that; that the money would be found all right.

Mr. Eyster, in view of the above facts, felt it his duty to discharge Bond, which he immediately did, and caused the remaining bags in the office, bearing Bond's mark, to be examined, whereupon they discovered that, in numerous instances, he had put up bags of quarter-eagles one or more pieces short, which would account for the increase in the deficit from \$800 to \$882.50, with the exception of a counterfeit half-eagle found in one of his bags.

It is not at all probable that an honest man could put up a single bag with one piece short without finding his account for the day one piece over; but when this occurred sometimes twice in a single day or week, and very many times in a few weeks or months, without once finding he had anything over, if this was from carelessness, why was it not manifested just once or twice in having one of the bags over? No; the committee are of the opinion, based upon the facts of the case, that Bond was a dishonest clerk.

On Mr. Eyster's taking charge of the treasury at Philadelphia, he found this man in the office, and, becoming aware of his capacity and usefulness, retained him not only in office, but promoted him, having no doubt of his original honesty.

Mr. Eyster some time since submitted all the facts in the case to the Solicitor of the Treasury, and was by him referred to the district attorney of the United States in Philadelphia.

The district attorney, in a letter dated February 28, 1876, discourages a prosecution in the United States court for the reason that, in his opinion, the offense is not punishable under any statute of the United States.

Mr. Eyster is of opinion that the coin was abstracted upon the theory that if once at the mint and melted, the absence of \$1,000 in so great a quantity would either not be noticed at all, or else attributed to abrasion.

The committee feel fully satisfied that the loss of this coin was in no degree through any negligence or remission of the official duty of Mr. Eyster; and, in view of the above facts, recommend that the accompanying bill be passed, allowing the accounting officers of the Treasury Department to place the amount of this deficit (\$882.50) in coin to the credit of George Eyster, so that he may be relieved of the same.